

Village of Richfield
E-mail Retention Policy

1.0 PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to explain the need and outline the general provisions of the e-mail retention policy. Certain types of e-mails are defined in Wis.Stats. §19.32(2) as public record and the Village is thus required a plan to retain the proper records as required by State law. Lack of a proper program leaves the Village open to legal vulnerability and possible repercussions. Data storage is expensive and overloaded computers and servers can crash which can prove very costly to the Village to repair. Thus it is imperative that unnecessary e-mails be deleted regularly and important e-mails are properly stored to insure compliance with State law, avoidance of unnecessary expenses, and proper operation of all of Village of Richfield departments.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:

This policy applies to all Village of Richfield departments, divisions, offices, boards, commissions, committees and Village employees.

3.0 POLICY:

It is the policy of the Village to follow this set of procedures for e-mail record retention.

3.1 NATURE OF E-MAIL RECORDS:

As a general rule, e-mail is a public record whenever a paper message with the same content would be a public record. See Wis. Stats. §19.32(2) for definition of a record.

3.2 COMPONENTS OF AN E-MAIL RECORD:

The e-mail record is defined to include the message, the identities of the sender and all recipients, the date, and any non-archived attachments to the e-mail message. Any return receipt indicating the message was received by the sender is also considered to be part of the record. If an e-mail is to be saved all components must be included for the record to be valid.

3.3 E-MAIL RETENTION TRAINING:

The Village will appoint the Clerk the main point of contact regarding the e-mail retention program. For training purposes the Clerk will be the approval authority. Training is absolutely necessary in order to streamline operations of saving and deleting the appropriate e-mails and to ensure all those required to follow the policy have a clear understanding of all aspects of the policy. This policy will put

into great detail the importance of and how e-mails will be stored in network folders.

3.4 SAVING E-MAILS PROPERLY:

The Village will ensure proper network folders are set up and guidelines are detailed as to what e-mails must be in saved into which folder. All e-mails which are entirely personal in nature without any relation to any Village business are to be deleted as soon as possible so as not to hold data space on the servers. These e-mails may be stored on individual computers and mailboxes for a default hold period of six months. E-mails pertaining to Village business will be stored in appropriate network folders for an indefinite period. If there is ever confusion over whether an e-mail should be saved to the network folders the employee will contact the Clerk in order to get clarification as to the action needed to be performed with said e-mail message.

3.5 NETWORK E-MAIL FOLDER AUDITS

As deemed necessary by the Village Administrator, audits will be conducted of the folders containing their saved e-mails to ensure the e-mail retention program is being followed by all subject to the policy correctly.

3.6 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT:

The Village, if deemed needed, will seek technology support from a contracted source to properly set up the necessary network folders and provide trouble shooting support. If technology support is available within the Village staff contracted services will not be used.

4.0

PUBLIC ACCESS TO E-MAIL RECORDS:

If a Village department receives a request for release of an e-mail record, the appropriate department head will ensure the record is appropriate for public release and will refer the request to the Village Clerk for processing. As with other records, both electronic and paper, access to public records shall be provided within a reasonable time.

5.0 VIOLATION:

Employees violating this policy are subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. In addition, violations of this policy may be referred for civil and/or criminal prosecution, where appropriate.

6.0 REFERENCES:

Wis. Stats. §§16.612, 19.21 et. seq., 19.32 and 19.33.